

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a tray having a first accommodating section in which the operating portion can be positioned and accommodated;

a lid member which can be selectively set in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating section and in an open state to expose the first accommodating section as a whole with respect to the tray, the lid member having a second accommodating section capable of accommodating the flexible inserting portion;

wherein the second accommodating section is provided in the surface of the lid member that is on a reverse side of a surface opposing the first accommodating section when the lid member is in the closed state to cover the first accommodating section.

36. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, further comprising.

an outer lid member to cover the second accommodating section of the lid member which is set in the closed state with respect to the tray.

37. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, wherein the lid member has a positioning portion to

accommodate the flexible inserting portion so that portions of the flexible insertion portion do not come into contact with each other.

38. (Canceled))

39. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, wherein the flexible inserting portion-integral with the operating portion that is accommodated in the first accommodating section provided in the tray and the second accommodating section is adapted to accommodate a middle portion of the flexible inserting portion.

40-42. (Canceled)

43. (Previously Presented) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a first accommodating member that is a tray in which the operating portion can be positioned and accommodated; and

a second accommodating member rotatably disposed on the first accommodating member, the second accommodating member being adapted to accommodate the flexible inserting portion to prevent at least one of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with the operating portion and surfaces of portions of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with each other in a state of having accommodated the operating portion in the first accommodating member, wherein the first accommodating member is separate from the second accommodating member.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 43, wherein the second accommodating member is a lid member which can be selectively arranged in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating member and in an open state to show the first accommodating member as a whole with respect to the first accommodating member.

46. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, wherein the lid member has a curved wall in order to accommodate the flexible inserting portion with a curved shape.

47. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 46, wherein the lid member has a surface opposing the first accommodating member when the lid member covers the first accommodating member and an opposing surface, and the curved wall is provided on the opposing surface.

48. (Previously Presented) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, wherein the lid member is adapted to accommodate a portion of the flexible inserting portion from a distal end of the flexible inserting portion to a portion between the distal end and a proximal end of the flexible inserting portion.

49. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a first accommodating member that is a tray in which the operating portion can be positioned and accommodated;

a second accommodating member rotatably disposed on the first accommodating member, the second accommodating member being adapted to accommodate the flexible inserting portion to prevent at least one of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with the operating portion and surfaces of portions of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with each other in a state of having accommodated the operating portion in the first accommodating member, wherein the first accommodating member is separate from the second accommodating member, wherein the second accommodating member is a lid member which can be selectively arranged in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating member and in an open state to show the first accommodating member as a whole with respect to the first accommodating member;
and

~~further comprising~~ an outer lid member which covers the lid member arranged in the closed state with respect to the first accommodating member.

50. (New) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a tray having a first accommodating section in which the operating portion can be positioned and accommodated;

a lid member which can be selectively set in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating section and in an open state to expose the first

accommodating section as a whole with respect to the tray, the lid member having a second accommodating section capable of accommodating the flexible inserting portion; and
an outer lid member to cover the second accommodating section of the lid member which is set in the closed state with respect to the tray.